

LA CLOSERIE DE LILAS

that could not mean as much as if I had been more conversant with the delicacies of the language.

It was the occasion of the placing of a tablet of homage to the great poet, at which ceremony Henri de Regnier himself was the chief speaker: a tall, very aristocratic, very elegant looking Frenchman, not any more to be called young, nor yet to be called old, but conspicuously simple, dignified, dressed in a manner of a gentleman of the first order, standing upon a chair, speaking, as one would imagine, with a flow of words which were the epitome of music itself to the ear. I had been invited by a poet well known in Paris, with several volumes to his credit and by a young literary woman, both of whom spoke English very creditably. After the ceremonies, which were very brief, and at which Madame Mallarmé herself was present, standing near the speaker, de Regnier, the entire company repaired to a restaurant near the Place Clichy, if I remember rightly. My hostess named for me the various guests as they appeared, Madame Rachilde, Reynaldo Hahn, André Gide, and a dozen other names less conspicuous, perhaps, excepting one, Léon Dierx, who was an old man, and whose death was announced about the city some days later. It was, needless to say, a conspicuous company and the dinner went off very quietly, allowing of course for the always feverish sound of the conversation of many people talking in a not very large room.